



First This

This issue was a really hard one to write. It's the G, H, I issue of the encyclopedia set. Starting out with Girl Gangs and moving on to Hell. It's a lot about sexual abuse.

Please make sure that you are someplace safe and have someone to talk to before you read it (if you want)

Part of it is about how incest effected me. I wanted to write about ways that I have been sexually manipulative and abusive too - that line between sexual liberation and fucked upedness, but I wasn't quite ready. Next issue I will.

There is also a story about Guatemala and one about gender stuff. and some comics. I wanted to have a Giggles and Gaggles section to provide a little break from the heavy stuff, but there wasn't room, plus my jokes I made up are pretty stupid: for example:

What do you call a water-loving creature that eats cabbage and mayonaise?

(qstj-me[s e])



Thanks to Amanda for the letter she wrote and let me reprint. Chris Boarts took the photograph for the long awaited #21 Doris cover. Thanks Chris! What would I have done without you? Dan drew the crawfish and Shari made the back cover! Thank you! Also, always, thanks to my sister, Caty.

Doris is \$1.50 or dollar plus two stamps by mail. I have a few copies of #20 left, that's it.

CINDY ROB 1734 ASHEVILLE NC 28802

summer 2001

GIRL GANGS

1991, down the street from my house on Fathers Day, there it was, spray painted in the alley: "Dead Dads Don't Rape". and it made me feel like there was someone behind me, after all those years, not a man creeping up, but a girl watching my back. an invisible force. A girl army. A girl gang.

Jacob, walking with me, said "That's pretty reactionary. It's not like all dads rape", And I was thinking about '85 and my friend who really did kill herself, not just cut wrists or too many pills like everyone else I knew did. Erika hung herself on Fathers Day. Of course we knew why, we had to have known. But none of us talked about any of that shit back then.

Can I tell you what it was like when the girl gangs started? It was amazing to see. I want to talk about this and not their faults. I want to talk about the power I felt in my body; the power and relief when I saw their flyers - and how their violence made everything so much more immediate. Our lives are a war

and not less of a war than the one against the naziskins or the one against the class system, not less of a war than the war against the state. Our lives are a war, and you're part of it boy, and this war is full of unignorable realness and strong, fucking strong as hell emotions.

I want men to take us seriously. I am
tired of wanting them to
think about right and
wrong. I want them to
fear. I want them to feel fear
now as I have felt suffering.
And I want them to
know that there is always
a time there is always a
time for what is right
what is wrong, always a
there is retribution
time for time is begin
and that
ning.



The girl gangs redefined rape, and suddenly everything counted. All the shit that happened to me counted,

they made it real. My stepbrothers hands counted, the record store owner that used to get me to suck his dick, the time Paul fucked me from behind in my mothers kitchen, all the times I slept with that one boyfriend because he said if I didn't he would find someone else. All the comments on the streets, the 'accidental' gropes at the shows. Kill them all. It's

retribution time. Can you imagine the power in saying that? Here's how it was: finally there was a counter ballance in my brain. Ignore, forgive, spit kill. The options widened. It was not a private issue any more.

no locks we must learn trust

no cindy, you can
not have locks on
your door. If it
happens again just
wake us up. wake us up.
come upstairs wake us up.



how could that be possible at all.
-- alone -- trapped --

I didn't actually want retribution at that point. I wanted to work hard to dismantle patriarchy. I kept myself sheltered with a small group of friends who were all committed to anti-sexist work. But there had been a time when I tried to have my stepbrother killed.

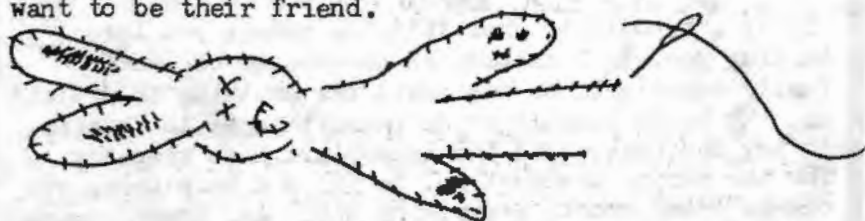
It is a hard thing when it's the people you love hurting you. If I talked, it threatened our whole family structure. No one could fix anything or protect me. My brain learned to do these things: to forgive, to try and understand the causes and have sympathy for the people who hurt me. to try and help them, change them, smooth everything over. And these became the biggest parts of me. I could see the potential for good in everyone, except me.

The girl gangs taught me I could fight and hate. They wrapped tinfoil around their knuckles, dragged boys out of coffee shops and beat them up. They slipped drugs into the rapists drink, carried him home and cut off his dreads, tattooed 'rapist' on his forehead. They dressed sexy and walked in groups and carried baseball bats and attacked the cars that whistled at them.





The girl gang glued my locks and poured laquer all over my floor and left death threats on my answering machine because I was harboring an enemy - my best-friend, the most broken boy I knew, who had gone out with one of the girls when they were very young, and he had spit after going down on her. said it smelled bad. So there were death threats and a meeting where I said I understood if they needed to beat him up, but if they killed him, I could not be friends with them, the girl gang, anymore. and I did still want to be their friend.



Here are the things I think about most when I think about the girl gangs: I remember Allison sewing a pink bunny suit for a disguise because she'd gotten in a fist fight with the bus driver and he wouldn't let her on the bus any more. I think about how they forced our lives and our pain into the public eye. All the little ways our lives are effected by rape and sexism and silence - all the things we're supposed to just live with, they scratched open and let bleed. I think about how belittled they were and still are.

I think about ~~how~~ impossible it must have been to be a boy during that time when they had redefined rape and were accusing everyone of it. And I wish there hadn't been so much reaction and defensiveness and I wonder what we do now with the words and the definitions.

There were things that happened to me that I called rape then, that I wouldn't define that way now. There is no way to put everything on a scale. What was worse? My step brother molesting me, on-going non consensual sex with a boyfriend, or the daily torture of growing up sexualized female? I needed to call it all rape to validate it, because the other words were not strong enough for how I felt. I needed strong words to be able to fight and learn to believe that

what felt wrong was wrong enough to try and do something about.

And I think the boys needed to hear it put that way too. They were so clueless. So much was taken for granted. Like sex was just fun, it didn't matter what you did. It was a simple thing, nothing wrong unless the girl said no, and even then, may be she didn't mean it.

The girl gangs forced a dialogue. They made people fear. For the short while that they were around, I think people talked more, both publicly and privately. Like, "I was abused and here's what it's done to me and I'm not sure what to do with it all but I need

you to be careful, to watch closely and be aware."

With them gone now, and so entirely demonized and made fun of, I'm afraid the real work they did is disappearing too. I'm afraid too much is taken for granted again. Like everyone knows that everyone's been abused so what's the point in talking about it. So much silence. I'm wondering how many times we'll have to start from scratch. Wondering if there's a ~~single one of us who had~~

single one of us who has been honestly seen and heard.

HOW TO NUMB YOURSELF

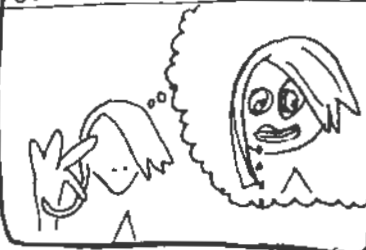
by Cindy age 14

STEP ONE: SIT IN YOUR ROOM AND STARE AT ONE SPOT OUT THE WINDOW.

(basement window)



STEP TWO: PRACTICE FEELING NOTHING. IT IS OK TO PLAY WITH YOUR HAIR AND PRETEND YOU ARE IN A PSYCHE WARD TO REACH THIS STATE OF NOTHINGNESS.



STEP THREE: PRACTICE BEING SO NOTHING THAT EVEN WHEN THERE ARE LOUD, STARTLING NOISES IN THE HOUSE, YOUR BODY DOES NOT RESPOND.



STEP 4: WHEN OUTSIDE OF YOUR ROOM, PRACTICE LOOKING ONLY STRAIGHT AHEAD. IMAGINE YOU HAVE GLINDERS ON. IMAGINE UNTIL YOUR BRAIN ACTUALLY STARTS TO DIMINISH YOUR FIELD OF VISION.



STEP FIVE: IMAGINE YOU CAN'T HEAR THE PEOPLE AROUND YOU, UNTIL YOU ACTUALLY START TO LOSE YOUR HEARING OR THEY GIVE UP TALKING AT YOU. (IF YOU HAVE TO TALK, TRY TO DO IT IN MONOTONE)



STEP SIX: DURING THE DAY, REPEAT THIS MANTRA:

THEY ARE all stupid. they are all brainwashed fucked up monsters and robots. no one will ever really care about me. F*CK IT ALL.



STEP 7 at night look in the mirror and repeat this mantra:

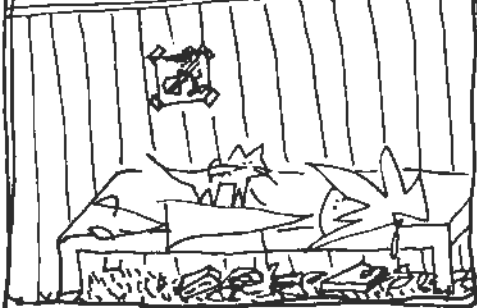
I AM SHIT. I AM CRAZY. I AM UGLY. I AM SICK. I AM BAD AND DISGUSTING AND EVERYTHING I TOUCH BECOMES POISONED. NO WONDER I AM SO ALONE, THEY CAN SEE THE DISEASE INSIDE OF ME.



STEP 8 PRACTICE LOOKING IN THE EYES OF THE PEOPLE YOU ARE SUPPOSED TO LOVE MOST + THINKING "I COULD CARE LESS IF YOU LIVE OR DIE".



STEP NINE LAY DOWN FOR BED BUT DON'T LET YOURSELF SLEEP.



STEP TEN THINK OF THE PEOPLE WHO ALMOST GOT CLOSE TO YOU. WAS IT THEIR FAULT OR YOUR FAULT? YOUR FAULT. CONVINCE YOURSELF IT DOESN'T MATTER. PROMISE TO NEVER WANT ANYTHING, INCLUDING TRUST OR COMFORT, EVER AGAIN.



STEP 11 DECIDE YOUR DEFENSES ARE CHILDISH. DECIDE NEEDING + WANTING NOTHING IS ACTUALLY THE MORE ADVANCED WAY TO BE + EVERYTHING ELSE IS NEUROTIC.



STEP 12 so empty inside... sunrise... give up... sleep...



THIS NEXT PART HAS DESCRIPTIONS OF ABUSE

WARN-
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↓

You might not want to read it.

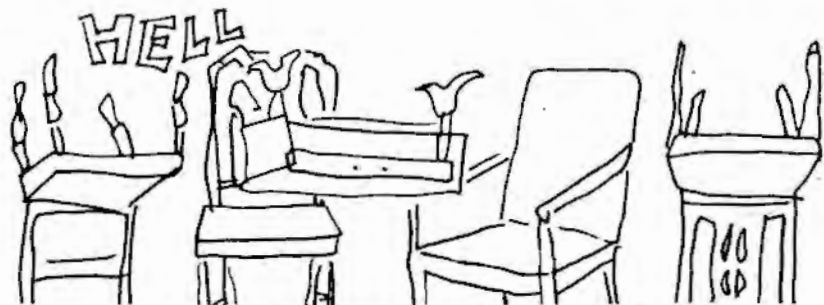
(NOT THIS PAGE
BUT THE NEXT
FEW)

Sometimes this kind of writing makes me feel so overwhelmed and hopeless. Sometimes it makes me feel really defensive in this weird way. Always it triggers a lot. If you think it might trigger stuff for you, please make sure you are someplace ok before you read.

Partially I'm not even sure why I'm writting this. I don't want to retrainize people or any of that shit. But sometimes I am afraid that a lot of people don't really understand and feel

how real and prevalent sexual abuse is and how much it is in so many of us. What it does to our lives. I want it to be made real. I want it to change the way we communicate and care for eachother. I want people to know for sure that this is there. I want people to talk and fight against it.

and maybe I just need to somehow say this. this huge part of my life, this huge part of our lives. I want it felt by the people who don't have to feel it.



I was driving with Gerty and he was trying to read "Cibola", and he said he couldn't read it. He felt bad but it was just too much. It's about abuse, about split personality. "Do you know about split personalities" he said. and I nodded, hoping he wouldn't try and explain splitting and it's causes to me. Partially I was mad because, my life. how couldn't I know about it. And part of me feels really crazy

because I can't remember whether or not Gertie has been abused too.

I say "You don't have to read it. Some times are too hard and sometimes we're too fragile to read or think about some things and still function." I say "there is only so much we can take. only so much we can know".

Part of me wishes I could go back and have the luxury of not knowing all the things I do, and part of me is screaming Why haven't you known.

I only know the tiniest fraction of my friends stories. There was a time in my healing when I pulled stories

out of people. I knew no one had ever been heard enough, and I wanted everyone to be cared for and listened to. I wanted to create a world where we could talk about our abuse openly and not just in times of crisis. I wanted to feel less alone. I wanted to talk because I knew it was in everyone, bottled up, and the stories you tell are your life, the stories you don't tell control you.



I can't remember most of the stories I was told, because if I remembered them all, I think I would kill myself, but the knowledge and terror is in me. I have two friends who were ritually abused as babies, three who were used in child porn. I have one friend who was raped by a stranger in the park and then stalked by him for months. She called the cops, but they laughed at her.

She is a black woman, the rapist was white. Girl talked dirty to all the time by father. Girl constantly grabbed at, constantly humiliated, can't escape. And how many uncountable stories of first second third boyfriends who did unwanted things. How many times have I heard "All that time I thought that's just what sex was. You were just supposed to lay there and bear it".

My [redacted] spent 13 years and 3 kids with my [redacted] and said "I never enjoyed sex with him", but only once does she define as rape. And what do I know of the other times? My cousin has a scar the size of her back from an iron put there when she was a baby, and the cigarettes out on her arms. My second boyfriend was molested by his mom and I had to sit in her class, knowing this. She is talking about art and I want to kill her. And in her house, in her living room, I get rug burns on my back wondering how long can this possibly go on for, him pounding into me and staring into my face.

I did not know there was any way to be present. I didn't know I'd left my body because I didn't know what being in my body was.

Tara in the paddy wagon on her knees with the cops in a circle, one shoving the night stick in and out of her mouth, laughing. And the girl I knew on her way home from grade school with her friend dragged into the

bushes. They killed her friend and her throat was permanently damaged so now she only talks in a whisper.

Why VS ?

Why is it just the survivors who read books, trying to understand how it's effected us? Why is it only the survivors working hard to stay present in sex, while partners get carried away with assumptions; all the times consent to one thing was assumed to mean consent to a whole array of others. Why isn't everyone reading and talking, and not just when 'something' comes up so visibly it can't help but to be seen, the emptiness or crying.

i got this letter...

I got this letter from Amanda: "...Scott was telling me about how important he feels it is that we figure out how to deal with perpetrators, not by alienating them,

but so that things will be different. That people already know how to give support to survivors, maybe they don't do the best job but it's sort of instinctual to know how to deal with that. And this makes me think, Oh yea, that's what happens.

"If we place so much emphasis on healing the perpetrators, then this attitude comes out that it's a really easy thing to do to support survivors; plenty of people are doing that but someone needs to work on the really hard stuff. Fuck that. I mean, for me it's pretty hard to figure out how to offer support to someone who has just had someone try to take every bit of their power away from them, and if it's my friend or family or partner, then how is it supposed to be instinctual to know how to give them what they need and also deal with my own feelings of anger and sadness or whatever someone is going through.

How do we know how to do that and even with lots of time spent thinking about it and talking about it and reading and trying to figure it out, people are so bad at being supportive friends and community and human beings, and there is so much work to be done that just trying to imagine it all is exhausting.

And also, if people are able to receive the support they need, then they are more likely going to be more capable to speak up and name rapists and tell others

what they need and doesn't that help to make things better? Doesn't your zine and all the other zines, all the people telling their stories and trying to figure it all out together, isn't that more important than giving some jerk a list of things to do so he can feel better about himself again. I mean, I know it does more than that, and I really do think it's important, it's just there is still so much work to do on all sides..."

WHAT KIND OF WORLD IS THIS? WHERE MY WHOLE SELF IS DESTROYED AND STILL I HAVE TO BE THANKFUL? I AM THANKFUL

I am thankful I have never been forcibly raped by a stranger. I am thankful that nothing sexually abusive ever happened to me before I was 14. I am thankful that I have been so lucky.

part of my story

No matter how hard I try, when I hear metal I think of my only friends, the neighborhood boys I was so happy to be accepted as a friend to. Tomboy me, in secret love with my stepbrother. Him and them sitting in his room writing porn about me. I found this out later. Him and them hearing the shower go on, and sneaking up to watch me through the window. The dildo in my bed. the hands on me when I was sleeping. All those nights of hands or him just standing there, looking.

if I were you I might be thinking that's it? what's the big deal

THINGS THAT MAY SEEM SMALL ARE ACTUALLY HUGE + NEED TO BE HEARD + NOT DISCREDITED.

That's all. that's it. but it effected every bit of me. My entire life and every part of it. It set into motion a whole series of events. I was never heard or taken care of, and I still feel like I will never be heard or taken care of. From the time I was 14 to 20 I was totally depressed and suicidal. I thought the only reason people talked to me was because they wanted to fuck me.

I fucked them, sometimes because I wanted to, sometimes to get it over with, sometimes to prove to myself and the world what a bad person I was. I believed deep down I was bad. I believed everything I touched turned to shit. I believed I was not

worth anything. I thought that I was insane. I thought that I was a slut. I thought that I was an angel sent from heaven to have sex with people and act really passionate and make them feel really good about themselves.

A lot of times I didn't know when I was really enjoying myself and when I was just acting. I still have this sometimes. I still am scared of all the middle ground. I am comfortable being friends, comfortable fucking, but all the slow stuff inbetween is way too scary. I don't want to think 'do I want to be doing this' because if I think that question, even if the answer is yes, it triggers off all the hundreds of times I have had things done to me and my body that I didn't want. And how I have never been able to say anything. And about the few times I did say something and it didn't make a difference, the thing being done

to me didn't change, and I wished I'd kept my mouth shut after all. It has kept me quiet. When I speak out in defense of myself or my friends my body shakes for half an hour. I feel terror and I can't help it.

I can't be involved in the kinds of political projects I'd like to be, because it makes me crazy and unable to function. some days I can't leave the house. I feel constantly watched and looked at, especially when I think I am alone. For a long time I thought women were too emotional, they were too threatening. I didn't want them for my friends.

and i couldn't be with boys who were nice to me.

I never touched my own body until I was 24. I started drinking heavily. I am afraid to get close to people because I have no faith at all that they'll stick with me. I am afraid that

once the passionate, performing, beginning of a romance wears off, all my fears and problems and self hate and body abuse triggers will come up and they will not want to hear or know or work on it all with me. So what is the point in trying or explaining or asking for help. I don't think anyone is interested

in my real life. I have spent 19 years dealing with how much I have been effected by abuse. I've gotten

a lot better. I don't hate myself at all any more. I have spent 19 years and have finally gotten most of myself back.

I don't know if people understand how much it all kills us, how every part of our lives is different. It needs to be seen, needs to be recognized, needs to be dealt with. I am amazed that I made it through these years, and I was one of the lucky ones. I was full of self love and love for the world before my abuse happened, so I had that in my core, somewhere inside was that resource. and I had some amount of privledge.

Do you know about split personalities? I don't want to hear you. I can't know this. I can't read this. I don't believe you. She's exagerating. I want things to be solvable. I don't want to think about this unless there's an answer, a beginning and an end.

I want all the non abused people to start committing themselves to dealing with this, reading about it, talking about it, you can talk with eachother. you can ask if it's ok to talk with us. I want you to in your hearts start wanting to understand the depth of it.

i want people to stop saying that they don't know how to be there, how to deal with it. I want them to set aside time to figure out ways that they can.

CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS

for a zine about
supporting people
who have been
abused

please send your stories

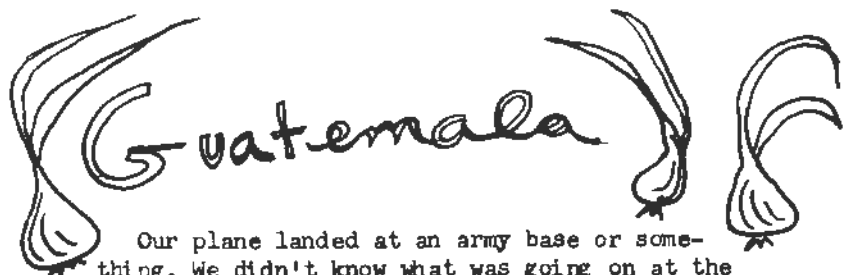
I WOULD ESPECIALLY LIKE TO HEAR FROM PEOPLE WHO WERE NOT ABUSED. HOW DID YOU LEARN TO UNDERSTAND ABUSE + IT'S IMPACT? HOW DID YOU LEARN TO BE SUPPORTIVE? I WOULD LIKE TO GET ALL KINDS OF STORIES. STORIES ABOUT LEARNING TO COMMUNICATE, STORIES ABOUT BEING SUPPORTIVE ABOUT SEX. STORIES ABOUT ALL THE DAILY LIFE STRUGGLES. WHAT DO YOU WISH YOU HAD UNDERSTOOD ALL ALONG? WHAT FEARS DID YOU HAVE? WERE THERE THINGS YOU DID WRONG AND WHAT COULD YOU HAVE DONE DIFFERENTLY? STORIES OF SPECIFIC THINGS AND OVERALL LIFE. PLEASE SEND ME!

doris: pob 1734
asheville, NC 28802

*no deadline yet. i'd
like to put it out by
the end of 2004*

* I ~~DO NOT~~ MEAN I ONLY WANT TO HEAR FROM PEOPLE WHO WEREN'T ABUSED! I WANT STORIES FROM ALL OF US. ♡ ♡ ♡ ♡





Our plane landed at an army base or something. We didn't know what was going on at the time. Me and Mollie, all wound up and excited. We were skuttled out, no time for customs, no money exchange, just guided out the door, armed soldiers all around, and we didn't really know if this was just normal, well, she knew it was strange.

It was deep night, we were tired and hungover still, happy and anxious and confused and I thought what am I doing here? Guatemala.

I had sworn years ago, when I got back from Russia, that I would never leave the country again. What was the point if I didn't speak any languages and had no real purpose anywhere. It was just tourism, and a shitty kind of tourism at that - the kind where I wanted to be seen as an exceptional white girl, not so privileged, different from the rest.

I wanted to be recognized and accepted. I was full of guilt and wanting to understand everything and not being able to.

In my body, I felt like I learned something about these places: the small town in Siberia where the children played a game that looked exactly like "duck duck grey duck" and I learned to buy laundry soap and bread. There was no one our age in these small Russian towns, only the young and old, everyone one else gone to the cities. And in the city, the teenagers drinking and smoking in the ruins of what had once been a magnificent building I'm sure, right in the city square. I felt in my body like I was learning something, and that it would change how I understood history and the world and myself, but I also felt like it was a shallow, made up understanding.

Guatemala. Mollie called me up, late winter in Asheville, when the cold had seeped into my bones. She said "100 tickets round trip to Guatemala! we have to buy them today!" So I said yes.

103,

cheeper than driving my van to
Gainesville and back. and it
would be nice to see the rain-

forests before they're all gone. I want to see
monkeys and huge colorful birds. I want to hear
the sounds. I want my brain to be pushed in new
ways, and I want to be somewhere I can't talk at
all.

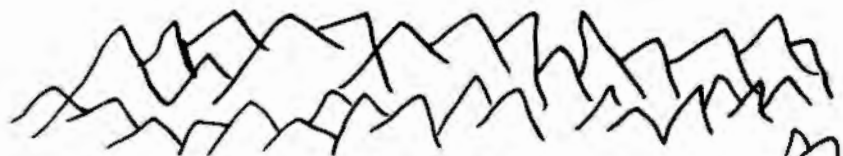
Mollies grandpa had a house there in the mountains
in a city that had once been small. He had lived
there forever, since before the revolution, and
had once been a civil rights lawyer, volunteered
for Cesar Chavez. Moved to Guatemala. Was a drunk.
When he died he gave his house to his friend Berto.
That's where we were going to stay.

The history of Guatemala is a brutal one. All the
terrible history of colonization and then the fate
of Central American countries that fell under the
sphere of US interests after WWII (the polite way
to say, ours to control, fuck with and exploit).
We provided the weapons and training, and insisted
that democracy not even get a toe hold, that the
poor be kept firmly under.

In Guatemala, unions and peasant associations were
subject to random terror to keep them silent, and
by 'terror' I don't mean arrest, I mean murder.
They killed everyone. That was even the policy for
quite awhile.

If you went to a
street protest chances were you or someone you
knew would be killed - but still people protested,
and organized, and fought to live with dignity.

Guatemala has a huge Mayan population, and they
have preserved their culture and fought for
their lands. They have been totally
discriminated against like Indiginous
people everywhere.



In 1931, the ruler, Jorge Ubico, made it legal for landowners to kill Indians. He developed really efficient systems of repression and control. He looked up to Hitler, which the U.S. press did its best to ignore, because they thought he was just the greatest.

In 1944, the revolution came and overthrew Ubico and brought a new government to power, with president Jacobo Arbenz. The next 10 years were a time of sweeping land reforms and other social reforms. Over 1 million people were given land, and people in general were becoming politicized, feeling like they could have a say in shaping their lives and their country - they had the right to political participation.

The revolution's goals were to free Guatemala from military dictatorship and economic colonialism. To immediately improve the low living standards of most people, and to diversify the economy. They said that "the first beneficiaries of the development of a country's resources should be the people of that country."

An idea which seems pretty obvious, but is not at all ok with the USA. And the US government did what it takes to keep power. In

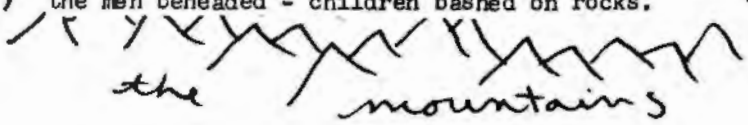
1954 the U.S. led a coup. 8,000 peasants were killed in the first two months, mostly United Fruit Company union workers and Indigenous village leaders. There were the usual huge lists of "communists" to be killed, imprisoned and tortured while the U.S. made Guatemala "a showcase for democracy". All reforms were reversed, of course, and the new government was unimaginable. It was a lot worse than the one from before the revolution.

It was the kind of horror I can not even write about. Numbers and figures too high to understand.

And all the times these words come up - villages destroyed - all the women raped then killed - all the men beheaded - children bashed on rocks.

the

mountains



I go into denial. How can we exist in a world where this happens? And how can people in power want this power so bad? And how do they decide genocide is a necessary contingent of U.S. economic growth and stability? and who is really benefiting from all of this really? And is it possible that we need all those fucking bananas? I mean, what is going on? who are these monsters? the men who control the world.

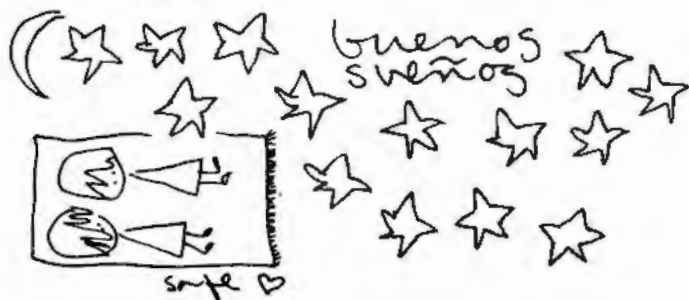
In Guatemala we stayed with Berto. There were red flowers growing along the fence of the tiny yard. There was an evangelical church next door that played music so loud, so late into the night, it was like a punk show, music possessing you. singing to forget and to purge.

Every morning we woke up to fireworks welcoming the day. Breakfast of avacados, eggs, tortillas. Every morning at 8:00, we walked to language school, where we talked for 5 hours a day, one teacher per student. Every day I stared at this young man's lips, trying to copy him, get the pronunciation right. trying to remember words and wanting to communicate so badly. Every day I would become so overwhelmed I would cry.

We lived a quiet life in this loud village turned half city, tourist town. We didn't talk too much. Spanish took over our heads. I started to get my tongue around the words, started to dream Spanish, and I felt like maybe it wasn't impossible and I felt like it was all I wanted to do.

Sometimes we felt terrible, sometimes we felt good. Sometimes we could not deal with anything past our front stoop and the not too busy street. We sat there, eating bannanna bread, drinking tea. We drew pictures and read. *and my life changed there, with her.*

We slept curled up together after I said "I don't think I can sleep in bed with you. Every time I try that with someone it gets confusing". She said "I think it will be ok. We could just try it." And it was. It was fine.



Some days we deciphered the paper. There was a three month long teachers strike going on. They had walked across the country to Guatemala City. They had taken over the airport and blockaded all the major roads. They had taken over part of an oil pipeline and basically said they would shut down the whole country until their demands were met - free education for all children.

How is this possible in a country with this history. I can not fathom the courage. or may be I can. They knew what they were doing and they won some of their demands.

I left and flew home to a country mobilizing.
I came home to another war.

read:
OPEN VEINS OF LATIN AMERICA
by Eduardo Galeano
BRIDGE OF COURAGE by Jennifer
Harbury

THIS BOOK IS ABOUT
THE PEOPLE WHO TOOK TO THE
MOUNTAINS + FOUGHT AND ORGANIZED IN THE
70'S - 90'S - THE REVOLUTIONARIES. THEY ARE
SO AMAZING + I WANTED TO WRITE ABOUT IT,
BUT BETTER FOR YOU TO READ THEIR OWN WORDS.

gender part one

When I was young I wanted to live outside the world of humans. I wanted to be the girl alone, without human judgement around me; without their eyes and hands and voices and meanness and needs and expectations. I wanted to be the girl in The Island of the Blue Dolphins. I would learn to make my own spears. I would break the customs of my culture. I would do what girls were not allowed to do, and there would be no one around to see so it would be no big deal. It would be regular life.



I am not sure how self aware I was or if I thought about it like that at all: what girls are supposed to or not supposed to do.



My dreams were
me and the deer and
thesquirrels. Me and the insect.

I followed paths in the woods. I slept in the fields.

I hung out with the grasshoppers on the side of the freeway. In my dreams I was alone and accepted.

When I was growing up, it was a different world than the one we have now. Girl power hadn't been come up with or co-opted yet. John Hughes hadn't made his movies. Sluts were sluts and freaks were freaks and there was nothing powerful or redeeming about either.



I started paying attention. I started reading teen magazines and Cosmopolitan and trying to lighten my hair with lemon juice and hide my worst features with the proper shades of makeup. I read about the top ten secrets of what men like in bed. I wanted to be the drummer for VanHalen but I knew they would never let a girl in the band, so I dremp't they had try outs and I dressed as a boy and was such a good drummer that they let me in, even after I let my hair down and came out as a girl. I wanted to be strong and brave and desirable. I wanted to be a girl, but an exceptional one.

When did I start hating girls? When I couldn't ignore the outside world anymore? New houses, stepfamilies and Jr.High.

In the locker room I was ashamed of my flat chest and no bra, and when I started to get breasts, I was so embarrassed I thought I would die.



Boys made fun of and commented on girls bodies all the time. (and so did the girls the girls and judged eachother harshly)

I sat at the lunch table alone. Girls talked about which boys were cute and which boy like who; which girls were sluts. Gossip, diets and clothes. This was not a language I knew or gave a shit about. But the isolation was terrible.

Where did my power lay? Girls could be anything, doctor, lawyer, even president of the U.S.A. (yeah, right) Doctor, lawyer, it was all a load of shit. We were nothing if we weren't a certain kind of pretty and a certain kind of flirt. We had to be very careful: not sluts or cockteases, not uptight, frigid, bitch, innocent, not lesbians.

We were nothing Nothing. And our bodies weren't ours to say who could or couldn't touch.

I did not want to be a girl but I had no choice.

What white american patriarchal capitalist culture values as MASCULINE:

self control
rationality
consistency
strength

the ability to stick with an idea and never back down. to protect. to provide. to laugh things off. to move with confidence no matter what. to use logic and emotional distance to understand the world and people's actions in it. not to cater to anyone else's needs.

What white american patriarchal capitalist culture values as FEMININE:

to nurture

Some of the ways women are systematically represented and demeaned by white american patriarchal capitalist culture:

irrational, hysterical, crazy, petty, untrustworthy, use emotions to manipulate men, need to be rescued, and taken care of and saved from themselves, take everything personally, overreact, burdensome, and over all just kind of ridiculous.

I was a girl who hated girls

And all my power lay in my body, so I used it and sex became the most important thing in my life.



When I was a girl I wanted to live outside the realm of human. I did not fit anywhere, and why should I? I learned to value the masculine and belittle the feminine. And eventually I started unlearning all of this. I thought - these words are weird. I thought - feminine and masculine are in everyone and it's the task of the revolutionary to integrate and love them both.

I remember reading the poetry of Audre Lorde and Adrienne Rich, and the essays "Uses of the Erotic, the Erotic as Power" and "Compulsory Heterosexuality". The book This Bridge Called My Back. The poetry of Ntozake Shange, Mary Oliver; Grace Paley's short stories, Sylvia Plath's The Bell Jar.

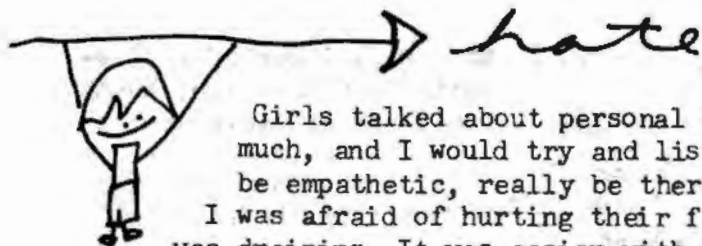


And I wanted this. Not that their words were always perfect, but I wanted to be able to see and speak and feel these deep ways that they did. To call on our history. To stop dismissing. To start naming and changing this world and me.

what had I hated about girls?

I hated that some of them show their weakness, talking openly about relationship problems and either they didn't see or weren't embarrassed by their need for male approval like I was. I did not want real personal stuff to be part of our spoken about lives. I did not want to let it be important. I hated that they were not more self-confident and that their needs were so obvious and strong. I thought girls were fickle and competitive. I was jealous but pretended I was beyond it, and thought girls were so annoying when they were jealous of me.





Girls talked about personal things too much, and I would try and listen closely, be empathetic, really be there for them. I was afraid of hurting their feelings. It was draining. It was easier with boys. They were stronger and more removed. Their feelings weren't as serious. We could laugh things off. I didn't feel so much responsibility.

I liked the power I got from being better than a girl.

I hated girls who talked about political theory too much. I thought they were trying to prove that they were just as smart as guys. I hated girls who embraced girly things as some kind of empowerment. It seemed so surface and meaningless.

I wanted to love women and hang out with the dykes, but the dyke scene I found, I couldn't relate to. I felt really vulnerable around them and like I had to learn the rules to some new game. They were always talking about who was HOT HOT HOT ACT, and I tried to see it as somehow not objectifying, but it felt so creepy to me, and I didn't want to play.

I hated talking about sex. I hated any sign that sexism really did touch us. I hated being reminded of things I didn't want to feel. I hated feeling like I was automatically supposed to have something in common with women and feel safe and comfortable with them, and able to open up, when usually I felt totally weird and unrecognized. I felt like there was nowhere for me to be.

And what I want most is to create a space in this world now where we can be real and whole and rid of all this fear and judgement and shit that is inside of us and inside of me.





I learned to respect and love these parts of me:

empathy = the ability to step aside from myself and feel another person's feelings.

compromise - the kind that comes from in the heart wanting the best for the community, not the selfish kind that feels like giving up.

I learned to want to see all the complexities, instead of wanting to make things simple and easy to deal with. I learned to love my strong feelings instead of thinking they were crazy; and to love the creative instead of thinking it was frivolous and just got in the way of more important political work.

It took me years of really consciously fighting the sexism inside of me; really consciously dissecting these systems of oppression and control. Reading history, theory, feminist psychology, poetry, fiction. Looking at the ways we communicate, what is valued and why; and what were my defenses. Which ones could I let go of because I no longer really needed them to survive. I looked at the specifics of how I wanted the world and my friendships to be. I tried to become more self-aware and more honest. More self loving and more humble.

It seems ridiculous, but I know it's really true, that it took me years of hard and painful work for me to start liking and valuing women and the feminine in me and everyone. And now this is where my heart is.



What would have happened if I'd had a choice, when I was a girl who did not want to be one?

If I could have just easily become a boy, would

I have done this work? Would I have accepted and cultivated the masculine in me and continued to belittle the rest? Would I have been committed to



a radical feminist politics? would I have been working to blow apart a world that has kept us all in boxes? If I had been able to become a boy, would I have struggled to really understand myself and this world, or would I have been able to just relax with my privilege finally and forget about it.

if I had been able to become a boy, maybe I would have felt freedom and been able to do all kinds of things in this world that as a girl I couldn't.

Maybe I would have all kinds of different things, not just my body and maybe I wouldn't have spent all those years where sex was the only place I felt power, and sex was the place I tried to deal with every fucking thing in my life and in my head. If I had been able to become a boy maybe I wouldn't have been filled with so much self hate and fear.

who knows.
simple as any of that.
sort of the wrong
asking anyway.



felt valued for different things, not maybe I wouldn't those years where place I felt power, place I tried to fucking thing in my head. to become a boy have been filled and fear.

It is not as
and probably it's
question to be

Like maybe the question should have been, not what would have happened if I could have been a boy, but what would have happened if the people around me were challenging gender, looking at the world that makes us, looking at the boxes and the reasons for them, and supporting each other while we create and recreate ourselves, whatever way we want to.

I have not always been a good transgender ally. I have been frightened by the implications of people born girl deciding they are not that, and afraid that somehow that would undermine my struggle. I have been afraid to ask questions because I didn't want to look fucked up or uncool or stupid. I have been tired, not wanting to have to think about anything new. But I love it more than almost anything now. This struggle, this life. this new world we are making,

i wanna

NOAH GOT A MOPED TO RIDE FROM HERE TO CANADA. GOT PART WAY THROUGH THE BLUE-RIDGE MOUNTAINS BEFORE IT DIED.



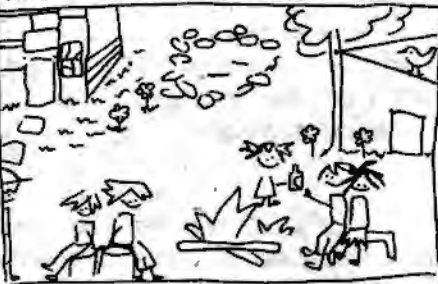
MORNINGS AT WOODFIN, THE BOYS WOULD CALL ALL THE WEIRD HELP-WANTEDS ADS FROM THE "I WANNA"



AND YOU CAN PUT FREE ADS IN WANTING THINGS, LIKE DAN'S "WANTED FREE GOLDFISH" FOR THE POND HE MADE BY HIS SHACK OUT ON HIGHWAY PROPERTY



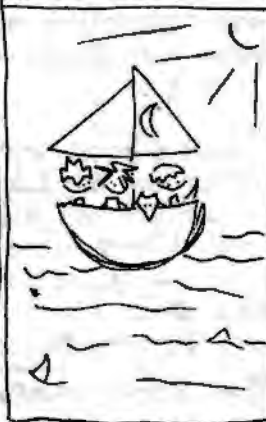
Shackland SUCH A BEAUTIFUL PLACE, 3 SHACKS MADE OF STUFF FOUND AND PUT TOGETHER WITH A STAINED GLASS WINDOW, AN OUTSIDE KITCHEN, SEA MONKEYS AND A BIRD. Shackland



WHEN RYAN AND NAOMI WERE OUT OF TOWN, THE BIRD BUILT A NEST IN THE CAST IRON KETTLE HANGING INSIDE THE DOORWAY OF THEIR SHACK. IT WOULDN'T MOVE OUT WHEN THEY CAME BACK. THE BABIES HATCHED. IT BECAME KNOWN AS "SHACK OF THE BIRD"



THERE ARE SOME THINGS YOU DON'T KNOW TO WANT UNTIL YOU SEE THEM

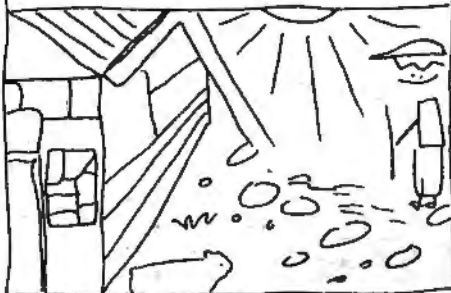


THERE ARE SOME THINGS YOU DON'T REALIZE ARE MISSING FROM YOUR LIFE UNTIL YOU FEEL THEM





DAN DUG A POND, DUG DRAINAGE AND BUILT GUTTERS, BUT THE RAIN NEVER CAME TO FILL IT. IT WAS THE THIRD YEAR OF DROUGHT

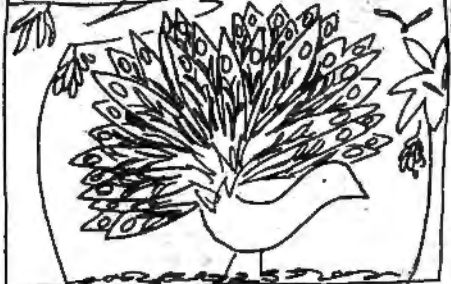


HE HAULED WATER AND THEN THE MISQUITO LARVA TOOK OVER.



JANET BROUGHT HIM TEN FISH

TUESDAY MORNING THE "I WANNA" COMES OUT, AND I READ: FREE PEACOCKS, BANANA TREES, PRESENTS I THINK OF BUILDING A LIFE TO FIT THESE THINGS



and I wish I could live a bunch of lives simultaneously



THERE IS SO MUCH TO FIGHT



SO MUCH TO BUILD



SO MUCH TO LOVE



